

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended.

The Examiner has rejected applicants' claims 1, 4-11 and 14-20 under 35 USC § 102 (b) as anticipated by the Itagaki (U.S. 5,241,400) patent. The Examiner has objected to applicants' claims 2, 3, 12 and 13 as being dependent upon a rejected base claims. Applicants have amended applicants' independent claims 1 and 11, and with respect to these claims, as amended, and their respective dependent claims, the Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claims 1 and 11 have been amended to better define applicants' invention. More particularly, amended claim 1 now recites a controlling means for independently controlling an image forming operation of each of the plurality of the image forming means to cause image density settings of the plurality of registration correction marks to be formed by the plurality of image forming means to differ from each other so that each of the registration correction marks formed by the plurality of the image forming means has a different predetermined image density. Applicants' amended claim 11 now recites a controlling means for independently controlling an image forming operation of each of the plurality of the image forming means so that the registration correction mark of a predetermined color is formed at a first predetermined density and the registration correction marks of colors different from the predetermined color are formed at a second predetermined density different from the first predetermined density.

The constructions recited in applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 11 are not taught or suggested by the cited art of record. More particularly, the Examiner has argued that the Itagaki patent discloses an image forming apparatus (figure 1) comprising a plurality of

image forming means (figure 1) each having an image carrier (2-5) and forming an image carrier (column 3, lines 27-36); mark detecting means for detecting a plurality of registration correction marks formed on a recording medium (column 2, lines 11-20 and column 5, lines 49-58); correcting means for correcting a position difference between images formed by the image forming means in accordance with the corrected marks (column 2, lines 11-34 and column 5, lines 49-58), and means for independently controlling an image forming operation of each of the image forming means so that an image density of each of the registration correction marks formed by the image forming means has a different image density (different colors) (column 2, lines 11-34, column 5, lines 48-58, and column 8, lines 1-50).

Applicants have reviewed the passages cited by the Examiner, and there is nothing taught or suggested in the Itagaki patent of controlling an image forming operation of each of the plurality image forming means to cause image density settings of the plurality of registration correction marks to be formed by the image forming means to differ from each other so that each of the registration correction marks formed by the plurality of the image forming means has a different predetermined image density. In particular, column 2, lines 11-34, column 5, lines 48-58 and column 8, lines 1-50 of the Itagaki patent disclose an image formation apparatus having a system controller 21 which controls the speed of the transfer belt 1 so that the reading process of each color is performed at a slower speed than the image transferring process. These passages of the Itagaki patent also disclose that during the reading process picture-image pattern data is transmitted to a registration controller 20 on the basis of which mechanical mounting errors between the photosensitive drums 2-5 and variations in the length of the light path are computed. Although the Itagaki patent discloses picture patterns formed from different colors, as argued by the Examiner, the Itagaki patent is completely silent

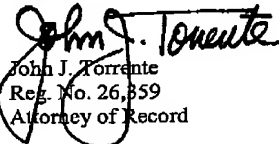
as to controlling the image density, rather than only the color, of the registration correction marks. Accordingly, the Itagaki patent fails to teach or suggest controlling the image density of the registration correction marks to be formed by the plurality of image forming means to differ from each other so that the registration correction marks have different predetermined image densities. Applicants' amended independent claims 1 and 11, and their respective dependent claims, all of which recite such feature, thus patentably distinguish over the Itagaki patent.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicants' independent claims 1 and 11, as amended, and their respective dependent claims, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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